

THE  
CHRISTIAN'S CHARACTER  
OR A  
DISCOURSE

Persuading  
Mutual Love and CHARITY to one Another,  
And that under our different Opinions,  
Persuasions in Matters of Religion.

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By a Presbyter of the Church of SCOTLAND.

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Love worketh no ill to his Neighbour, therefore Love is the Law. Rom. xiii. 8.

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CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

DISCOVERED

1804

T O

Mr. *WILLIAM INNES* Writer to  
His Majesty's Signet, and Baillie of the  
Regality of *Dalkeith*.

S I R,



*I* being the great Design of  
human Society in general,  
and of the Church or Chri-  
stian Society in particular to  
promote Peace and Union a-  
mongst its Members; its certainly the Duty  
of every Person in his Station, to use his utmost  
Endeavours, in order to accomplish and obtain so  
great an End: This mov'd me to publish this  
Discourse. I think its Innocent and well meant,  
and I hope may do good to some, which is all I  
intend by it.

S I R,



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S I R, It being very Conspicuous and well known in this Place, how much you by your exemplary Life, and charitable Temper, have contributed towards the removing Mistakes, reconciling of Differences, and sweetning the Minds of those under your Influence, and thereby engaging them to mutual Love and Concord; I could not skun presenting you with this short Discourse on Christian Love, being a Subject very agreeable to your Christian Temper, and a Testimony of my sincere Affection, for so worthy a Gentleman and kind Benefactor. I am with all Respect,

S I R,

Dalkeith,  
July 30, 1722.

Your most Humble

and most obliged Servant,

H. FOULIS.



**T H E**

## **Christian's Character.**

**C**hristianity is a Soft and gentle Institution, brought into the World by the Prince of Peace, our blessed Saviour, in order to cure the Barbarities of evil Men, and the Contentions of the Passionate: As it contains in it the most intire and complete System of Moral Rules and Precepts, that ever was yet Extant in the World: So it peculiarly excells in the Doctrine of Love and Charity, earnestly recommending, strictly enjoining, vehemently, and almost perpetually pressing and inculcating the Excellency and Necessity, of this best of Graces and Virtues, and propounding to us for our Imitation and Encouragement, the most lively and Heroical Example of Kindness and Charity,

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that ever was, in the Life and Death of the great Founder of our Religion, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, *Jesus* the Prince of Peace.

But there is nothing more apt to grieve the Heart of a good Christian, than the Consideration of the miserable Distractions, the deplorable Differences, and unnatural Divisions, which are among those, who profess the Glorious Religion of Christ *Jesus*; especially when it is remembred, that no Duty is more frequently, or more vehemently urg'd by our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles, upon the Members of the Christian Church, than Charity and Union among Christians. That Heart must be harder than a Stone which does not bleed to see Christians (who by the Command of their Great, but meek and tender Lord, ought to be *Harmless as Doves, and Innocent as Lambs*) transported by preposterous Zeal, and pious Pretences into Wolves and Tygers, and with a fierce and savage Fury, mutually worry and devour one another.



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It is melancholy to see a Christian fighting, and contending with a Christian; but that they should contend and wrangle about Peace too, and that Peace it self should be made an Argument of War, that is unnatural: And were it not that there are many in the World who pretend to great Zeal for Religion, but are void of Godliness; it is not possible there should be so many Contentions in the World, in and about that Religion, which is wholly made up of Peace and Truth, and which was sent into the World to reconcile the Hearts and Affections of Men to one another.

But now Christians, who all profess one common Name and Faith, think they do not set their Seal to that Truth, unless they shed the Blood of one another: And that commonly for Differences in Opinion, for Words, Names, Fancies and Conjectures. It were certainly better for Men to renounce their Baptism, and to profess themselves Heathens and Enemies to Christianity, rather than to keep on a Mask of it, and under



der that to be so fiery, and act such horrid Things, so contrary to its Nature and Design.

What is Religion good for, if it be not to reform the Manners and Dispositions of Men, and to restrain human Nature from Violence and Cruelty, from Falshood and Treachery, from Sedition and Rebellion, from Hatred, Wrath and Malice, Envy and Revenge, Spite and Prejudice one against another; certainly it were better, that there were no revealed Religion at all in the World, than that it should transport Men with so wild a Fury, as if the Design of Religion were no other, but to drive Men to commit Outrages, to supplant Government, to undermine the Wellfare of Mankind, to disturb Humane Societies, and to make themselves ten Times more the Children of Hell and Damnation, than they were before. How opposite and contrary is this, not only to that new Commandment, which our Blessed Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ* has given to us of *Loving one another, even as he has loved us*; but even to

to that old Commandment, of loving our Neighbours as our selves. *Lev. xix v. 18.*

*Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self.* Now

Christ came not to abrogate the Law of Nature, but to perfect and improve it, as he has advanced and improved this old Commandment, *To love our Neighbour as our selves,* so by giving a new Commandment, *To love one another, even as Christ also hath loved us.*

*A new Commandment (says he) I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, St. John xiii. v. 35.* He makes this the great and visible Mark and Character, of all these that are truly and really Christians, his Disciples and followers: *By this shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

In which Words of our Blessed Saviour, there are two Things supposed, and a third taught, *First*, it is supposed, that all to whom these Words are spoken, either are, or ought to be *Christ's Disciples*, and that not only in



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Profession, but in Singleness of Heart, not only verbally and by Name, but truly and really such.

This is easily collected from these Words, *Ye are my Disciples*, 'Tis secondly supposed, that all such as are truly *Christ's* Disciples, ought to endeavour to make it known to all the World, that they are such. This is apparent from two Words more, *All Men shall know it*. But, *Thirdly*, we are to observe the important Lesson, which is here taught, (and which is now of all other Lessons most worthy of our Learning, especially if we reflect on the Times we live in) by what certain *Criterion* or Way of Proof, we may make Men know, that we are *Christ's* Disciples, and certainly the surest Testimony and Proof of it (which is by *Christ* here pronounced to be the infallible unerrable Mark of it) is this Divine Qualification of mutual Love. They shall know it even by this, *If ye have love one to another*.

Now this is to be the Subject of my Discourse, because it comprehends not only the  
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Chief and Prime; but the whole Importance of these Words of our Blessed Saviour, as we may judge, by comparing this Divine Qualification of Mutual Love, with a four-fold Emphasis that may be put upon the Words. For,

*First*, Our Blessed Saviour does not say, by this Men shall guess or conjecture, that ye are my Disciples, but they shall *know* it: Nor does he say *Secondly*, That your Discipleship under *Christ* shall be known, as a special Secret to some few; but as the Sun in his Meridian, *All men shall know it*. Nor does he say *Thirdly*, that all Men shall know that ye seem to be my Disciples by a Disguise, but that ye are my Disciples without Hypocrisy. Last of all, He does not say, That your Discipleship shall be known by decivable Tokens. He says not, that all Men shall know that ye are my Disciples, by your assembling your selves together in the House of Prayer. He says not, that all Men shall know that ye are my Disciples, by crying LORD, LORD. He says not, that all

Men shall know that ye are my Disciples, by your doing Miracles in my Name. He says not, that all Men shall know that ye are my Disciples, by being Orthodox in your Judgment, and by jumping together in your Opinions. He says not, that all Men shall know that ye are my Disciples, by your being of this or that Faction and Profession, saying as St. Paul taxeth the *Corinthians*, I am of *Paul*, and I am of *Apollos*, and I of *Cephas*, and I of *Christ*. I Cor. i. v. 12. No, no, by none of all these can ye be known to be *Christ's* Disciples; but by this it shall be known, as by a Token that can never fail, if ye have Love one to another.

But why is mutual Love and Charity one towards another here pronounced, by our Blessed Saviour, to be the authentick Mark and Criterion, by which we are known to be *Christ's* Disciples, seeing Heathens and Infidels themselves, by the very Law and Light of Nature and Reason, were taught to love one another; and accordingly we see many  
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Times, that they do love one another more intirely than we Christians do.

I answer, that there was never any Religion known in the World, that recommended this Duty so much as the Christian doeth, even in the utmost Extent of it commanding us to love our Enemies, to bless them that Curse us, to do Good to them that hate us, to pray for them that despitefully use and persecute us. This is the strange and Supernatural Doctrine of our Blessed Saviour: This is indeed the proper Goodness and Excellency of the Christian Religion (as *Tertullian* observes) it being common to all Men to love their Friends, but peculiar only to Christians to love their Enemies, bear Cursings ~~too~~ and Revilings with an undisturb'd Mind, such as could instead of reviling again, bless and speak well of them, and pray for them who lye in wait to take away their Lives, and yet this did the Christians, they embraced their Enemies, they pardoned them and prayed for them, according to the Apostles Rule, when  
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Enemies hungered they fed them, when they thirsted, they gave them Drink, they would not be overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good. *Rom. ix. v. 20, 21.*

And accordingly we find, that the Profession of the Primitive Christians, was to hurt no Man, to do good to every Man. The Christians then did not confine their Love and Charity, their Bounty and Liberality, merely within the narrow Limits of a Party, this or that Set of Men, but embraced an Object of Love and Pity wherever they met it; they were kind to all, even to their bitterest Enemies, and they did good to all, tho' more especially to them of the Household of Faith, that is to Christians. In a Word the mutual Love and Charity of the Primitive Christians one to another, was so eminent and remarkable, and exemplary, as to be taken Notice of among the Heathens, even to a Proverb, *See how the Christians love one another.* But O how far are our Times degenerated from these first and past Ages: Alas we may now be pointed by

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a very different Mark, See how the Christians hate and reproach one another, see how the Christians revile and disparage one another, see how the Christians calumniate and defame one another, see how the Christians undermine and overreach, deceive and betray one another; insomuch, that it is become a Proverb among the Turks. If you seem to distrust the Word of a Mahometan, you will mightily displease him, and he will say, with a great deal of Disdain! *What do you think that I am a Christian to deceive and betray you, as the Christians deceive and betray one another.*

O! How sad is it, that the Name of Christ, should be thus blasphemed. Certainly if a Jew, or a Turk or a Heathen should observe, what Hatred, and Wrath and Malice, what Envy and Revenge, what Bitterness and Animosity, what Craftiness and Treachery, what Cruelty, Spite and Prejudice, is among Christians, in their Transactions, Dealing, Commerce and Conversation one with another. He cannot but infer One of these Two



Conclusions, that either we must have a very bad Religion that allows and countenances such Vices, or else we must be very wicked Persons, who under the Pretence and Formalities of it, can act Things directly contrary to the Nature and Design of it; and on which of these Two the Blame will fall, appears plainly in this, That the Christian Religion confirms and inforces all the Dictates of Nature concerning Love and Charity, Candor and Ingenuity, Justice and Equity, and the doing to others, as we would be done to our selves, in the like Case, and that it is the great Commandment that our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ* has given us, *To love one another as he has loved us.* And by this great and new Commandment alone, all Men shall know, that we are his Disciples, if we have Love one to another.

It concerns us then to know what Love it is, which our Blessed Saviour meant, when he appointed it for the Measure by which we are known to be his Disciples. For Love is a very ambiguous Word, and all Sorts of  
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Men pretend to Love, not only Christians, but the profest Enemies of *Christ*, and that in the highest Measure and Degree of it, as for a Man to lay down his Life for his Friend. And plentiful Store of this Love we find among the Heathens; Histories tell us, not only of single Persons, ready to lay down their Lives for their Friends, and of Servants, who for saving their Masters, have destroyed themselves; but of whole Sects and Societies of Men, whose astonishing Love to one another, has raised them Monuments in Story, that will last as long as the Sun and Moon; yet very far were these Pagans from being known by such a Love, to be the Disciples either of *Moses* or of *Christ*.

There is a natural Kindness and Generosity which is common to Men, with the meanest Creatures, and so has no Affinity with that Love, by which we are known to be *Christ's* Disciples: We must not think that we have attain'd to that excellent Love that is required of a Christian, because we Love

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our Friends, or because we stand fast one to another, as being embarked in the same Interest, Drivers on of a Design

The Devils themselves have their Combinations, and are still at Agreement among themselves; but from a Principle of Policy, not of Love. Rebels and Traitors, Hereticks and Schismatics (the greatest Enemies of the Church and State) are wont to hold themselves close together, as carrying on the same Design, but from a Principle of Faction, not of true Love.

But what Sort of Love is it, by which a Man may be known to be *Christ's* Disciple then? The surest Way to know this is, to reflect a little on the Love of *Christ*, for such as *Christ's* Love was to us, such must our Love be to him, and to one another; we have his Word for it in divers Places, as, *A new commandment, I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* Now the Love of *Christ* was both extensively and intensively great, and so must ours. His Love reached to all in General, and to every Man  
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in particular, to all without Exception, without the Exception of the Ungodly, without the Exception of Sinners, without the Exception of Enemies.

So our Love must reach unto all, even to our Enemies, and to our Enemies of all Sorts, not only to *Jews* and *Turks*, and Heathens and Pagans, but to Rebels and Traitors, to Heretics and Schismatics, to our particular Persecutors, and Slanderers, for whom we pray with the Church in her Litany, that GOD would turn their Hearts. 'tis not enough then, that we love our Friends, or those of our own Side and Party, who agree with us in our Opinions and Perswasions, like many, who think they acquitt themselves fairly, if they extend their Love and Charity, to these of their own Sect and Party, of their own Opinion and Perswasion, whom they call the Elect and the Faithful, as if all others were Infidels and Reprobates; but we must extend our Love and Charity to all Mankind, as Christians, we must be in perfect Love and Charity with all the World, we must



look upon all Men, even Heathens and Infidels as our Brethren, as being linked and bound in a common Bond and Tye of Nature together. But there is yet a nearer Tye that binds us Christians; and that is our Relation to Christ, as being all brought out of the same Womb of Darkness and Ignorance, into the same marvelous Light of the Truth, being Partakers of the same Faith, and Co-heirs of the same Hope, and are all bound up by that new Commandment, which our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ* has given us, *To love one another, even as he has loved us:* And by this visible Character we are known to all the World, to be *Christ's* Disciples and Followers, *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples* (says our Blessed Saviour) *if ye have love one to another.*

My Design then being to press this Duty of Love and Charity one to another (now grown so cold in these evil Times) as the great Commandment, and the new Commandment, which the Blessed *Jesus* has left us; nothing can be more forcible to this  
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End, than to consider that Relation, which, we stand in one to another, and for the more distinct Conception of it, I shall briefly consider Men in these Three Relations.

*First*, I shall look upon them in their common Condition, as having the same Passions, and being subject to the same Infirmities, to the same Troubles, Crosses and Calamities, and so needing the Help and Assistance of one another.

*Secondly*, I shall look upon them as Men, Partakers of the same Flesh and Blood, having one and the same God and Father, and the same Nature for our common Mother.

*Thirdly*, I shall look upon them as Christians, as being all Members of that Body, whereof *Jesus Christ* is the Head, as being Partakers of the same Faith, and Coheirs of the same Hope, upon all these Accounts we are Brethren, and therefore we ought to love one another as Brethren.

And *Lastly*, I shall consider the great Pre-  
tence that Men have now a Days for Break-  
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ing off their Love and Charity, Unity and Amity with one another.

*First,* To begin with the First of these. The first Argument which I shall make use of to perswade Men to mutual Love and Charity, shall be taken from our common Condition, we have all the same Passions, and are subject to the same Infirmities, Dangers, Accidents, Chances and Contingencies, we need the Help and Assistance of one another, and therefore we should help and comfort, support and relieve one another, according to our Ability. We have Enemies enough, tho' we be not Enemies to one another. We have the Devil and his Angels, and Death and Sicknes, and Ten thousand Accidents, to consume and to dissolve us, yea the very Air which every Moment we breath in and out, doeth prey upon and devour us. We are frail, fading, sickly, perishing, mortal and decaying Creatures. O! therefore let us love one another. One Man is the Image of another Man, because the same Image of God is in all, every

every Man interprets another, and declares what he is. We are as Glasses one of another, one Man sees in another, not only what he is, but what he may be. The Beggar is a Glass for the King, and the King for the Beggar. The Shepherd's Staff has sometimes been turned into a Sceptre; and the Crowns of great and mighty Kings, we know, have sometimes been thrown down to the Ground. In another Man's Sickness, he may see that Disease that may seize on himself, in another Man's Poverty, he may see his own Honour falling to the Ground, and in another Man's Death he may read a Lecture of his own Mortality, in what Appearance or Representation soever he beholds another, he sees a Picture and Prophecy of himself. One Man's Necessities are but an Argument which plainly demonstrat, what another Man's may be, they are also a silent and powerful Appeal to his Affection, Pity and ~~and~~ Compassion, and a secret Beseeching him, to do unto him as he would be done unto in the like Case, to be of the same



Mind, which certainly he will be of, when with *Lazarus* he lyes at the Gate of another, we know not (how prosperous soever our Condition may be for the Time) how soon we may stand in Need of the Help and Assistance, the Pity and Compassion of Others; and therefore let us shew all the Kindness, Help and Assistance, that we can to others, according to their Needs and our Abilities: So uncertain is our Condition in the World, so obnoxious are we to manifold Necessities, Troubles and Calamities, that there is no Man whose good Word, may not sometimes stand us in stead, whose Help and Assistance may not sometimes oblige us.

The great *Pompey*, who triumphed over Nations, was at last beholden to a Slave, for celebrating his funeral Obsequies: We have all a natural Ambition & Desire to be loved and respected by all, and in our Need we demand Assistance, Commiseration of our Misfortunes and Relief in our Distresses, of all that are able to relieve us, and we think our selves heavily dealt with, and we

complain of Cruelty and Inhumanity, in these that refuse to help and relieve us: And therefor in all Reason and Equity; we should readily pay the same Love, Respect, Aid and Comfort to others, which we expect from others; for certainly nothing is more unreasonable or unequal, than to require from others those good Turns, which upon like Occasion, we are unwilling to render to others: Let us therefor love one another, we are all in the same common Condition, we have all the same Passions, and are subject to the same Infirmities, Crosses and Calamities, we are mortal and decaying Creatures, and therefor we should love one another, comfort and support one another, help and relieve, and assist one another, according to our Abilities.

2<sup>dly</sup>. The *Second* Argument to press this Duty of Love and Charity one towards another, is from the Consideration of humane Nature: We are all Partakers of the same Flesh and Blood, and therefor we ought to love one another: Nature has made us all

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Men, and made us all Brethren? Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? *Mat. ii. v. 10.* Why then do we deal treacherously every one against his Brother? *Joseph* thought he needed to say no more to his Brethren, to prevent their falling out by the Way, but to mind them that they were all one Man's Children; we are all the Workmanship of one immortal Hand of an unlimited Power. He that made the Idiot made the Scribe, he that made *Dives* made *Lazarus* at his Door, and he who made them all, casteth an equal Eye upon all, bindeth every Hand from Violence, and every Tongue from using Deceit, and maketh every Man a Guard, and a Protection to every Man; and who hath made all these, have not I the Lord! And if he has made them all, and linked them all together, in one common Bond and Tye of Nature, who shall separat and divide them from one another, who shall separat the Wise from the Simple, that he should baffle and deceive him, who shall separat

parat the Strong from the Weak, that he should beat him to the Ground; who shall separat the Rich from the Poor, that he should set him at his Footstool, and despise him : Nature has made us all Men, and all equal, pay Servants, to serve one another in Love, that the Poor may assist the rich Man with his Wisdom, and that the rich Man may relieve the Poor with his Wealth, that the Strong may carry the Lame, and the Lame may direct the Strong, that the One may be as Legs, the Other as Eyes, and so make up each Others defects.

Now the same G O D who has built us all out of the same Materials, as wee see, has also imprinted these Principles, and Notions and Inclinations, these Powers, Faculties and Abilities, by which, we may be able to help and assist, and relieve, comfort and support Others, as well as to serve and provide for our selves. One Blood in a Manner flows in all our Veins, one Nourishment repairs our decaying Bodies, and one common Air refreshes our languishing Spirits.



We are all fashioned according to the same original Idea, resembling God our common Father. We are all endued with the same Faculties, Inclinations and Affections, we all agree in the Essential and chief Ingredients of our Constitution and are only distinguished by some accidental inconsiderable Circumstances of Age, Place, Complexion, Stature, Fortune and the like, in which, in a very short Time we differ as much from our selves as from Others; so that what *Aristotle* said of a Friend is applicable to every Man, every Man is anothers self, so he that hates another detests his own Picture, he that wrongs another, injures his own Nature, he that denies Relief to another starves a Member of his own Body. The merciful Man says *Solomon*, *Doeth Good to his own Soul, but he that is cruel troubleth his own Flesh.* Prov. 11 V. 17. Neither can any personal Fault, erroneous Opinion, erroneous Practice or Discourse towards us, dissolve these Bands, for as no Unkindness of a Brother can wholly rescind that Relation, or free us from the Duties annex-  
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ed thereto; so neither can the Faults or Injuries, any different Opinion or Perswasion of any Man be a sufficient Ground to deny the Offices of Humanity and Charity unto him, but whatever his Opinions, Faults, Follies or Miscarriages have been, we must pity him and pardon him, even to *Seventy times seven times*, we must supply his Wants and Necessities, we must relieve him in a starving Condition, we must rescue and deliver him, if it be in our Power, from that Misery or Calamity, which he has brought upon himself, or is fallen into by Misfortune; but I shall leave this, and come to the Third Argument to press this Duty of Love and Charity one towards another.

*Thirdly,* We are all Christians and Members of that Body, whercof *Jesus Christ* is the Head, and therefore we ought, *To love one another, even as Christ has loved us.*

The Christian Church is represented in Holy Scripture, as one Body united to *Jesus Christ*, who is the Saviour of his Body, and the Head of his Church. This *St Paul* makes



makes a powerful Argument to Love and Unity, and upon this very Ground he exhorts the *Ephesians* to endeavour, *To keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* Eph. 4. Ver. 3. 4. Now what does this Bond of Peace signifie, but the external Communion of the Christian Church, when Christians live together as Members of the same Body. The Members of the Church as they are Brethren by Nature, so they are also by Grace, they are all Fellow Christians professing the same Faith and Religion, they are all Fellow Captives redeemed by the same Saviour, all Fellow Patients cured by the same Physician, they are comforted by the same precious Promises, and shall be crown'd all with the same Glory. There is one Faith, one Baptism, one Hope, one Eating, and being one in all these, they ought also to be one, in all the Offices and Duties, which are required to the perfect Accommodation of all these.

Listen to the Commands of God, search the Holy Scriptures, and find any Duty if  
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ye can, more peremptorly commanded by the Holy Ghost, more frequently pressed by the Prophets and Apostles than this. How often does the Gospel of Peace call upon us, to follow Peace with all Men if it be possible, and as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all Men? How much more with Brethren, Men of the same Church and Faith, and Religion with our selves, for to such it is written, be of one Mind, live in Peace, follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity and Peace, with all them that call on the Lord *Jesus*.

Now if Love and Union, be so necessary a Duty of Christianity, consider what the Evil of Schism is, which rends the seamless Coat of Christ, and divides his Church into so many Parties and Factions. The State of Christendom, is at this Day deplorable upon many Accounts, but nothing makes it more Lamentable, than the intestine Factions and Divisions, Tumults and Disorders that are in it. We have but Two Things to regard in the World, the Wel-



fare of our Bodies, and the Salvation of our Souls; and both these will be endangered by our Contentions and Divisions. Truth and Right, Liberty and Religion are always made the gilded Baits to delude Men, whereby their Souls are exposed to Confusion: Men now a Days set their Wits on Work, to bring Religion and Government to their Interest and Humour; we may see now not only Breach of Charity, Hatred, Malice and Envy, but even Atheism, Breach of common Faith and Honesty, the Violation of Oaths and Contracts, Murders and Massacres, Treasons and Rebellions, are the sad Consequents of Dissensions in Religion.

Surely these are the last and worst Days! Alas when was there in the Christian World, more of Unquiet; when was God's Church on Earth, ever more dangerously Rent and Torn; when were there ever more Schisms and Divisions fostered and cherished! When was God's Church on Earth ever more Migrant, or had more Enemies at Home and

abroad and ~~at home~~! When were there ever more Atheists to mock at Religion, when more Hereticks, to reproach, revile and slander it. When more Schismaticks, studying Divisions, affecting Parties, like unnatural Children, ~~wounding~~ and tearing their Mother's Bowels. Alas many are our spiritual and temporal Enemies, and strong is the League of Impiety that we are to encounter with in this World, our most united Forces and joint Endeavours, are all too little against them. And is it fit for Us to be divided amongst our selves, when whole Troops of *Moab* and *Ammon*, and Mount *Seir* are ready to encounter us? Alas that Christians consider not, that whatever different Opinions or Perswasions are among us, yet we ought all to be Members of the Church, that one Body whereof *Jesus Christ* is the Mystical Head. And is it not a Thing prodigiously Unnatural to see the Head plotting, the Tongue reviling, the Hands buffeting, and the Teeth devouring their Fellow Members. Certainly nothing tends  
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more to the Dishonour of the Church, ~~than~~ the Factions, Schisms and Divisions, that are among us? How many Anathemas are thundred out for trifling Opinions? And how few Hands are lifted up for Charity, which is the Soul and Life of Religion the great Commandment, and new Commandment, which our LORD and Saviour *Jesus Christ* has left us, and the great Badge and Character by which we are known to be his Disciples. *By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another, even as Christ has loved us.*

4thly. Let us consider the great Pretence that Men have now a days, for breaking of their Love and Charity, Unity and Amity with one another; and that is, that Men live in dangerous Errors, are Enemies of Faith and Goodness, and the true Religion, and all because they differ from them in their trifling Opinions; they cannot live in Love with them who love to live in Error: Error hath a foul Face, bears a distasteful and loathsome Name; but if we will reasonably consider the Matter, we shall find that Error carries no such Deformity, no such Terror or Monstrosity along with it, as to affright Men so far asunder, that they cannot look upon one another in that Relation: But if there were any such Power in it, the very Name of Love and Amity must be quite wiped out from among the Children of Men, there being almost as many several Opinions in the World as Men, and most of them erroneous. But why may not Men be divided in Opinion, and yet united in Charity? Why may they not draw opposite Conclusions, and yet conclude in Peace? Why may they not have different Conceptions of Things, and different Opinions even about Religion, and yet be of the same Mind one towards another? All Truths are not alike clear, nor all Duties alike weighty: Some Truths are of so little Evidence and Importance, that he who errs in them, meekly, calmly and charitably, may be both a better Man and a better Christian, than he who is furiously stormy, stiff, inflexible, and uncharitably Orthodox in Things of lesser Moment, that are no ways essential: And therefore it is unreasonable, that Men should hate,

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of reproach, revile and disparage one another, upon the Account of these different Opinions, as if Men should hate one Another, because their Cloaths are of different Colours, or because they differ in their Gestures, Tempers and Complexions.

It were heartily to be wish'd, that Christians would consider that the Articles of Faith, these Things which GOD has made necessary to be believed by every one in Order to Salvation and Happiness are but very few; and they are all so plainly and clearly set down in Holy Scripture, that it is impossible for any sincere honest minded Man to miss the true Sense of them, and they have an immediat Influence upon Men's Practice, their Lives and Conversations, to make them better, whereas the most of these Things, which make the Matter of our Controversies, and about which we make such a Noise and Clamour, and for which we so bitterly censure, and anathematize one another, are quite of another Nature, they are neither so clearly reveal'd in Scripture, but that good and learn'd Men, may after their best Endeavours, vary in their Notions and Sentiments about them. It cannot be thought that GOD will be offended with any Man, for his Ignorance or Mistakes about them. And if a Man be a good Christian, living in Obedience to the supreme Powers and Dignities in Church and State, why should we be angry with him, for having other Opinions than our Selves in Things indifferent? Why should we not rather permit Men to use their Understandings as well as they can; and where they fail of the Truth to bear with them, as doubtless GOD himself will, rather than by sticking for every unnecessary Truth to destroy that Unity and Amity, that Love and Charity that ought to be among Christians, by which we should be known to be Christ's Disciples.

But the great Evil is, that our different Opinions and Differences about Things of little Moment, fill the Minds of Men with Hatred, Spite, Prejudice and Malice, Envy and Revenge, Bitterness and Cruelty one against another, contrary to



the great Commandment and new Commandment that our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ* has given us, of loving one another, even as he has loved us. Men have no sooner espoused to themselves a Party, but as soon they advance to an Aversion and Alienation of Mind from all others. Were it not for this, it were hardly possible for so many of the Vulgar to be such Bigots in their several Factions, their Understandings are too weak to have any clear and different Apprehensions of the Points they contend for, only their Leaders have given them some general confused Nations, just enough to excite their Displeasure and Indignation, against all that differ from them, and then all their Hatred, Wrath and Malice, must presently be called Zeal for God, and for Religion; hence proceed these unseemly Reproaches and rigid Censures, wherewith almost all Parties pursue the *Antagonists*, so that we hardly know a milder Name than Heresy, or Doom than Damnation. These Men take it for granted, that their Opinions are the only sanctified Opinions, and then make them the Shibboleth, by which they discriminate not only their own Friends, but GOD's too, they lock up the Gates of Heaven, against all who bring not their Opinions alongst with them, for a Ticket of Admittance: And altho' they make the Way wide enough to receive the most scandalous Sinner of their own Perswasion, yet they pronounce it impossible to the strictest Piety of one that differs from them. And upon such Grounds as these, do Men mutually doom and damn one another to eternal Perdition, never considering, that while they so briskly presage the Damnation of others, they do but really prepare for their own.

But for all these Mens Zeal, they are not much discomposed to see Men have no Religion at all, it is only the having one different from their own, that awakens their Indignation, and then like *Saul*, when seiz'd on by the evil Spirit, they cast their Javelins about them, and think no Rigour great enough on such a Provocation: Yet many Times the very same Persons, who are thus at Odds, upon a Religious Account, can unite upon a vicious account, they who upon Account of their dif-

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ferent Opinions, mutually pronounce Dampnation to one Another, can with full Accord agree together in these Practices, which will ascertain it to them both: We have seen many, whose distinct Opinions fastened upon one another the Brand of Antichristianism; who have yet like *Gog* and *Magog* joined together against the Holy City, and they who could never yet agree among themselves, about the Way of setting up *Christ's* Throne, have yet been very unanimous, together in pulling down of the Church, the Thrones of Kings, and the primitive and Orthodox Worship: O how were it to be wisht, that all Christians would consider, that we are all linked together, in a Bond of Nature, as well as of Grace, we are obliged to love one another, by all the Obligations of Religion, of humane Nature, and humane Frailty, our common Condition, our Relation as Men, and our Relation as Christians, is a threefold Cord not easily broken; and these bind us to be kindly affectioned to one another, and to hurt no Man, but to do Good to every Man; but Men think it no Sin now a-Days, to juggle, dissemble, flatter and lie for the Cause of GOD and of Religion, a Practice which some of the most equivocating *Jesuits* would abhorre, as contrary to all the Rules of civil and humane Conversation, how directly opposite are these Things to the fundamental Principles of the Gospel, which commands us to love all Men, even our greatest Enemies to be merciful, as our Father which is in Heaven is merciful, to be kind and tender Hearted, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, to put on the Bowels of Mercy and Meekness, and long Suffering, to follow Peace with all Men, to shew all Meekness to all Men; and as we would, that others should do unto us, to do even so unto them, and to love one another; even as *Christ* has loved us.

Let us then leave all these weak and unworthy Ways of troubling our selves and others, let us turn our Feet out off these crooked Paths; and altho' we cannot always be reconciled to the Opinions of others, yet let us always love their Persons. Charity is from Heaven heavenly, and may have its



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Influence on Minds of different Opinions and Dispositions, as the Sun hath on Bodies of different Tempers, and may knit the Hearts of those together in the Bond of Love, whose Opinions may be as various, as their Faces, Tempers and Complexion. The Apostle St. Paul persuades the *Roman Christians*, Ro. 14. 19. to live in Love and Peace one with another, notwithstanding their different Perswasions in the ceremonial Matters of Religion: He does not set himself to resolve their Contraversies, to determine which Side held the truest Opinions, so much as to silence their Disputes, to allay their Bitternesses and Animosities, with which the several Parties persecuted each other, to oblige them to embrace one another in Christian Love and Charity; and tho' there could not be an Unity of Judgment among them, yet nevertheless, they should so order the Matter, that at least, there might be an Unity of Affection, and an amicable Communication one with another.

Certainly there is no one Point of Religion more necessary to be daily preached, to be frequently inculcated, to be earnestly pressed, to be loudly sounded in the Ears of all Christians, than this of Love and Peace, mutual Amity and Unity, under our different Apprehensions in the Matter of Religion. It hath Jared with Christianity in this Matter, as it did with the *Jewish* Dispensation of old; the great and principal Commandment which GOD gave the *Jews*, and which, as they themselves confels, was the Foundation of all their Law, was to worship the LORD GOD of *Israel*, and him only to serve; yet such was the Sottishness and Perverseness of that People, that this was the Commandment of all others, they could never be obliged to embrace and keep, but they were still running and whoring after the Gods of the Nations, notwithstanding of all the various Ways and Means and Methods, which GOD made use of, to reclaim them from that Sin. Now what the worshipping of one GOD was to the *Jews*, that Charity to GOD and Man, Love and Peace, Unity and Amity is to the Christians, even the Badge, the great distinguishing Law, and

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and Character of their Profession, and ~~that~~ there was never any Religion known in the World, that has been intituled to so many needless Disputes and Quarrels, that has been crumbled into so many Sects and Parties, that has been prosecuted by all the several Pretenders to it, with so much Heat and Fury, and implacable Animosity, that has been made the Occasion of so much Tumult, War and Blood-shed, as this excellent and innocent Religion of ours.

When shall that happy Unity, and perfect Charity bless the Church of GOD, in being one Flock under the great Bishop and Shepherd of our Souls? when shall the Breaches of Zion be made up? When shall Jerusalem, by being at Unity in itself, become the Glory of the whole Earth, the City of the great King. Long have we hoped to see good Days, and expected better Times, but the Harvest is past, the Summer is ended, and we are not delivered; but still we must hope to the End, and commit our Cause to God, who best knows what is fit for us, and who can well deliver her out of all her Troubles. If there be any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels of Mercy that at length laying aside all Bitterness and Wrath, and Malice and evil Speaking, all Variance and Emulation, all needless Quarrels and Contentions, we should unanimously join together, in following after the Things that make for Peace, still remembering the great Commandment and new Commandment, that our LORD has given us, *To love one another, as he has loved us*; the visible Character of all true Christians, *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.*

*MAY Almighty GOD again inspire all Lovers and Members of his Church with this excellent Spirit, to the Glory of his Holy Name, the Interest of our Blessed Saviour's Religion, and the Peace and Happiness of all the Genuine Members of Christ's Body, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*And unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the only true God, be all Honour and Glory, forever and ever, Amen.*





